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DIST 6 APRIL 1968

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

Rostow

DOI [redacted]

SUBJECT PRESIDENT THIEU'S VIEWS ON PROBABLE NORTH VIETNAMESE DEMANDS DURING FORTHCOMING PEACE TALKS

SANITIZED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NLJ 91-286
By sig NARA, Date 8-4-92

ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON (6 APRIL 1968) [redacted] 1.3(a)(4)

[redacted]

SOURCE [redacted] 1.3(a)(4)

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT THIEU [redacted] 1.3(a)(4)

EXPECTS HANOI TO MAKE TWO DEMANDS DURING THE FORTHCOMING PEACE TALKS THAT WILL BE UNACCEPTABLE TO HIM: (1) THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NFLSV) AND (2) THAT THE GVN FORM A GENUINE COALITION WITH THE NFLSV. THIEU CONSIDERS IT ESSENTIAL THAT [redacted] 1.3(a)(4)

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THE OPENING OF PEACE TALKS SHALL NOT LEAD TO A DIMINUTION OF U.S. AID AND THAT THE GVN EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FROM SEPARATING THE QUESTION OF A BOMBING HALT FROM THAT OF A TREATY TO END THE WAR IN SOUTH VIETNAM. THIEU SAID HE WAS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING DECLARING A GENERAL MOBILIZATION. [redacted] BRIEFED THIEU ON A NEW INTERMINISTERIAL COUNCIL CHARGED WITH STUDYING WAYS OF MAINTAINING GVN AUTHORITY IN THE EVENT OF ANOTHER EMERGENCY SIMILAR TO THE VIET CONG TET OFFENSIVE. END SUMMARY. 1.3(a)(

1. [redacted] PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU [redacted] 1.3(a)(4)

[redacted] EXPECTS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT (DRV) TO MAKE TWO DEMANDS OF THE AMERICANS DURING FORTHCOMING PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH THIEU WILL BE UNABLE TO ACCEPT. FIRST, THIEU EXPECTS HANOI TO REJECT DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT (GVN) AND TO INSIST THAT THE GVN NEGOTIATE WITH THE NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM (NFLSV). THIEU SAID THAT WHILE THE GVN IS WILLING TO MEET ANYWHERE WITH DRV REPRESENTATIVES, IT WILL NOT NEGOTIATE

[redacted] [redacted] 1.3(a)(

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WITH THE NFLSV. ALSO, THIEU THINKS HANOI WILL INSIST ON A GENUINE COALITION GOVERNMENT FOR SOUTH VIETNAM (SVN), INCLUDING THE NFLSV. THIEU SAID THAT NO SENIOR MEMBER OF THE PRESENT MILITARY OR GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHMENT IS WILLING TO ACCEPT A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

2. THIEU MENTIONED A NUMBER OF OTHER PRIORITIES TO WHICH HE WAS ADDRESSING HIS ATTENTION. HE SAID IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT THAT THE OPENING OF PEACE TALKS SHOULD NOT LEAD TO ANY DIMINUTION OF AMERICAN MILITARY OR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, SINCE THIS AID WAS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE PRESENT VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT THE GVN SHOULD ALSO EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT (USG) FROM SEPARATING THE QUESTION OF A BOMBING HALT IN NORTH VIETNAM FROM THAT OF A JUST PEACE TREATY ENDING THE WAR IN SVN. EVEN WITHOUT A BOMBING HALT, TALKS COULD LAST A LONG TIME. WITH A BOMBING HALT, THEY WOULD PROBABLY LAST EVEN LONGER. DURING THIS PERIOD THE DRV NOT ONLY WILL STRENGTHEN ITS MILITARY FORCES BUT IT WILL INFILTRATE MANY POLITICAL CADRES INTO THE SOUTH. IF NEGOTIATIONS ABORT, THE GVN WILL BE FACED WITH A MUCH MORE DIFFICULT SITUATION SINCE THE COMMUNIST POLITICAL CADRES WILL

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BE WORKING HARD TO WEAKEN POPULAR RESISTANCE. THUS, A BOMBING HALT SHOULD BE CLOSELY RELATED TO A SETTLEMENT IN THE SOUTH.

3. THIEU SAID HE HAS BEEN GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO DECLARING A GENERAL MOBILIZATION AS AN INDICATION OF GVN DETERMINATION. THE PRESIDENT ALSO SAID HE WAS SINCERE WHEN HE DECLARED THAT IT PROBABLY WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE ALLIES TO REMOVE SOME OF THEIR TROOPS BY THE END OF 1968. HE THOUGHT AT LEAST "SEVERAL BATTALIONS" SHOULD BE PHASED OUT BY THAT TIME AS A TOKEN INDICATION OF GVN DETERMINATION TO PLAY A LARGER ROLE IN ITS OWN DEFENSE.

4. [redacted] THE NEW INTERMINISTERIAL COUNCIL [redacted] CONSISTS OF THE MINISTERS OF INTERIOR, CHIEU HOI (OPEN ARMS) VETERANS, AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY, AMONG OTHERS. THE COMMITTEE IS CHARGED WITH STUDYING WAYS OF MAINTAINING GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY IN THE EVENT OF ANOTHER EMERGENCY SIMILAR TO THE ENEMY'S TET TRUCE ATTACKS. IT IS ALSO STUDYING WAYS TO COORDINATE THE GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL-WARFARE PROGRAM NOW SCATTERED AMONG SEVERAL MINISTRIES AND THE ARMED FORCES. [redacted] THE COMMITTEE HAD ALREADY AGREED [redacted] [redacted] 1.3(a)(4) 1.3(a)(4)

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1.3(a)(4)

[redacted] (CHANNEL CONTROL) (Dissem [redacted])

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ON THREE POINTS:

A. THE GVN MUST AKE ADVANTAGE OF ITS PRESENT INCREASED MORAL POSITION IN THE FORUM OF WORLD PUBLIC OPINION. SINCE THE GVN CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM THE USG IN THE BOMBING HALT AND IN THE INITIATIVES FOR PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, IT BENEFITS FROM THE IMPROVED MORAL POSITION OF THE USG RESULTING FROM THESE MEASURES.

B. THE GVN MUST DEVISE WAYS TO KEEP UP THE "FIGHTING SPIRIT" OF THE PEOPLE DURING PEACE TALKS. IF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE CONCENTRATE ONLY ON THE HOPE OF PEACE AND FORGET THE REASONS WHY THE GVN IS FIGHTING THE WAR AND IF NEGOTIATIONS DO NOT LEAD TO PEACE, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO RECAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE.

C. ALL STEPS POSSIBLE MUST BE TAKEN TO CONVINCE THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH THAT THEY MUST COMPEL THEIR GOVERNMENT TO ARRIVE AT A SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT. THIS WILL INVOLVE PRIMARILY THE DROPPING OF LEAFLETS OVER NORTH VIETNAM AND OTHER MEANS TO AFFECT PUBLIC OPINION THERE. [redacted]

1.3(a)(4)

[redacted]

5. FIELD DISSEM: STATE USMACV 7TH AIR FORCE DIR/JUSPAO (MR. MICHEL ONLY) CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF.

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